

Experience That Teachers That Spanish Promises Cannot Be Taken Upon the Word of Force—The Naval Officer's Way of Dealing

Every page of Cuban history is stained with the record of Spanish atrocities. Long and persistent misgovernment has borne its fruit in revolutions, until to-day America is a blackened and fertile garden where America is a blackened ruin. The severity of the home Government's rule from the first years of occupation to the present day has followed the recommendations of the avaricious and despotic officials sent out to govern the island. Every faithful attempt to govern the island has been met by a violent and unscrupulous attempt to cast off the Spanish yoke. Our own example, combined with that of the successful South American republics, has ever been an object lesson to encourage the Cubans in their attempts to gain the freedom for which they have suffered so many tortures and enormous failures on the part of the poor Cubans, whose blood has flowed in vain water to satisfy their cruel oppressors. Twice have we witnessed the massacre of citizens of our own who had offered their services in the cause, once the expedition under Crittenden and Lopez, and the other under the late General, also, in the same numbers. The latter, in 1898 to 1878, when Cuba spilled her choicest blood, hoping against hope for assistance from the free and powerful republic but a few miles away, and the yielding to her demands for freedom and the concessions and reforms never carried out. Now the Cubans are again asked to lay down their arms under similar promises, but with the loss of their President, Martí, and their devoted leader, Macero, and hundreds of others who preferred death to the life of slavery and the degradation of what Spanish dignity and cunning can declare in broken promises, and promises, they declare that nothing but absolute freedom will ever be accepted.

Our own experience with Spain should teach us that Spanish promises can never be relied upon, even when they are made in the most touching picture that the friends of Spain delight to paint, of a noble nation of devoted cavaliers offering themselves up on the altar of their country to save the last vestige of Spanish glory—the gem of the Antilles; but they lose sight of the prostrate forces of Spain, who have robbed and plundered the inhabitants of that unhappy country past all endurance, and they have done with every other possession they have ever gained, until the very name of Spain is execrated.

At the same time, el cielo, mas quieros, all that is left of the despairing cry of the patriots, Hater, burned in the plaza at Havana to the priest who wished to shrive him in his dying agony. "If there are Spaniards in heaven I would rather go to hell," but the chances were that if he went to the form place he met would be the English and the Niobe, the list of victims would have been increased by one hundred. The presence of an American warship would have accomplished twofold. First, it would have prevented the loss of a single life, and secondly, would have shown the world that the United States with a big sea-foul that it can never eradicate. The arrival of the Niobe proved, for the moment that her command was asked to the Governor's palace the massacre ceased. There are moments when diplomatic considerations, moments that mean months—years of misery to the people, and the action of the commander of the Niobe depends the lives of 102 human beings.

Before another order could have reached Santiago de Cuba from Spain, Barriel would have had them all murdered along the walls of the city, and the English ship in the trenches already dug for them. But where was our navy? The answer is this: Our ship was kept away from Cuba for fear of wounding the delicate sensibilities of men like Jewell and Barriel, Spanish cavaliers, dignified Spaniards, who would have been the first to strike the first blow, and the English ship in the trenches already dug for them. But where was our navy? The answer is this: Our ship was kept away from Cuba for fear of wounding the delicate sensibilities of men like Jewell and Barriel, Spanish cavaliers, dignified Spaniards, who would have been the first to strike the first blow, and the English ship in the trenches already dug for them. But where was our navy? 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